

TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF VISITATION MINISTRY

**A Professional Project
Presented to the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry**

Joey K. McDonald

May 1986

Copyright 1986
Joey K. McDonald
All Rights Reserved

Joey Kern McDonald

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

Faculty Committee

Cornisa R. Rogers
Dan D. Rhoades

March 31, 1986
Date

Joseph C. Hupp
Dean

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL ASPECTS OF VISITATION MINISTRY	4
III.	MEMBERSHIP VISITATION	20
IV.	VISITATION OF NON MEMBERS	34
V.	DEFINING THE CHURCH'S NEEDS: A PRACTICAL MODEL.	42
VI.	CONCLUSION	50
	ATTACHMENTS.	52
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	63

ABSTRACT

If it is true, to say that we love because God first loved us, then it is also true to say that we minister because we were first ministered to. As Christians the model we have in Jesus' ministry is the best evidence of this fact. The account we have of Jesus' ministry is one which is priestly, prophetic and nurturing.

For us, in terms of modern Visitation Ministry, this translates into three key elements. First, Visitation Ministry is biblical and theological. When Jesus suggests that when we visit the sick, imprisoned, or needy, we have visited him as well. We are reminded that as we reach out in ministry, the essence of the act of caring contains an element of the love of God. Furthermore, the biblical tradition we have in the Jewish and Christian scriptures provides a picture which says implicitly as well as explicitly, that a sense of community is an element of the faith community.

Secondly, Visitation Ministry is personal. That is, in the midst of community, we are called as individuals to reach out, to be there for others in a personal way as nurturers, prophets, and priests.

Finally, if we are to be effective in Visitation Ministry, we are called to be intentional. By intentionality, I mean we are to be aware of and to act upon the need of those around in order to systematically evaluate our effectiveness of our ministry of caring.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement:

This project deals with the problem of creating a functional theological-ethical model for visitation ministry.

Importance of the Problem:

Visitation ministry is a vital aspect of the ministry of any church. It is a ministry based upon Biblical tradition, yet fundamental to the life and health of the model local church.

Effective visitation ministry includes careful thinking and planning. The ministry of a local church can be improved by emphasizing the various aspects of visitation ministry. Noted parish consultant Lyle E. Schaller stresses the importance of new member assimilation in most of his research. New members not assimilated within a year frequently become dropouts according to Schaller. Visitation ministry is an inclusive ministry, hence assimilation would be one of its benefits. Furthermore, visitation is an enabling ministry which frees people to minister unto one another.

Since visitation ministry is enabling and inclusive it is beneficial to the professional staff of the local church. Laypersons who choose to express their gifts for visitation ministry give support to professional staff and free staff for other responsibilities. Visitation ministry is a means of bridging the gap which exists between ordained ministry and general ministry for it serves to remind each of us of the interrelatedness necessary for a Holistic approach to ministry.

Thesis:

This project undertakes to assess the effectiveness and argues that an integration of theology and ethics provides an effective basis for creating a model for visitation ministry.

Work Previously Done in the Field:

The current status of work in visitation ministry generally falls into two categories. The first is categorical overviews of the field written for clergy and other professional church staff. These texts provide information for analysis by case study and guidelines for determining performance problems. The second is instructional workshop texts. These texts provide a general overview of the field for persons training to work

in visitation ministry.

The problem this project will undertake is understanding the importance of integration between the theoretical implications and practical applications of visitation ministry.

Scope and Limitations of the Project:

This project will present theological and ethical assumptions drawn from Biblical and theological resources. It will include practical applications of visitation focusing on member and non-member visitation. It will also present a working model program used to define the visitation and programatic needs of a church.

Procedure for Integration:

Chapter Two, Theological and Biblical Aspects will interpret the theological and functional disciplines relating to visitation ministry. Chapters Three and Four, Membership Visitation and Visitation of Non-Members, is a practical study of the need for and impact of visitation. Chapter Five, Defining the Church's Needs, is working model used to identify the church's visitation and programatic needs.

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL ASPECTS OF VISITATION MINISTRY

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him, Lord when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee a drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee? And the King will answer them, Truly, I say to you as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me. Matthew 25:35-40 RSV

This is a primary scriptural basis for visitation ministry by the church. Whatever secondary notions we have for visiting, such as church growth and development, missions, or worship, require a scriptural basis as well. As United Methodists we have a four functioned theology based on the quadrilateral principle, with the scripture as primary and interpreted in the light of tradition, reason and experience. Therefore, I will begin with a scriptural basis for church visitation.

When we are confirmed in the church, we agree to the call to be disciples of Jesus Christ and to being builders of the Kingdom of God. It is in our discipleship that we experience the adventure, the challenge, and the excitement of being a Christian. Being a disciple is not just a statement of what we believe, but it is a call to

action. As disciples of Christ, we are called to help make God's love known to others through the things we both say and do.

We are as Christians to go and make disciples. In the 1980's we interpret this as ministering to people usually through the institution of the church. Therefore, church growth has become a very important issue in most churches. Jesus drew near and said to them,

I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. God, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.
Matthew 28:18-20 TEV

It is true that technology enhances the overall ministry of the Church. This project is evidence of that fact. The composition and editing of this project would have been a considerably more difficult task were it not for computer technology. However, technology at times causes us to feel we live in an impersonal society. This is true even in ministry. For with statistical data and the aid of electronic research, visitation ministry can be reduced to little more than a science.

With the advent of the electronic church one may be a part of an ongoing worship, yet not even relate to other people. Although there are times when there are negative aspects to technology, it has positively affected the

church. Technology can provide a great deal for the church in the areas of record keeping and communication, but it cannot surplant the essential qualities derived from personal relationships.

In this chapter I would like to suggest that we as the Body of Christ consider doing visitation ministry as if people mattered. Instead of looking at demographic surveys which tell us the various catagories of the individuals who attend the churches we serve, let us consider why we are involved in visitation ministry from a biblical and theological perspective. Let us use God's example of visitation as a basis for expanding love and caring to our neighbors, ourselves, and God.

The Bible is replete with stories and examples of Gods' care through personal interaction with the people of faith. The Garden account found in Genesis depicts God interacting with the people in a personal way. In Exodus 3:2, Moses encounters God in a burning bush. The Prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah received a personal messages from God. (Isaiah 6:1-12 and Jeremiah 1:4-19, respectively). In the New Testament, Paul had direct contact with Jesus on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9).

The Church as the Body of Christ, is considered to be an authority for Christian beliefs and actions. The Church is responsible for making God's love known in the world. Jesus' ministry continues through the Church. God

sent the Holy Spirit to empower the Church to carry out its responsibilities of determining doctrine, worshipping God, preaching God's word, making God's love known to others, and administering the Sacraments. Every Christian is part of the Body of Christ, the Church, and so each must do our part in making God's love known to others which is the mission of the Church.

If, from biblical examples we can say that we love because God first loved us, then we can say that we evangelize and visit because God first evangelized and visited us. Stated another way, we could say we are motivated by the love ethic. Theologian Howard Thurman alludes to this when he writes on love.

The religion of Jesus makes the love ethic central. This is no ordinary achievement. It seems clear that Jesus started out with the simple teaching concerning love embodied in the timeless words of Israel: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," and "thy neighbour as thyself." Once the neighbour is defined, then one's moral obligation is clear. In a memorable story Jesus defined the neighbour by telling of the Good Samaritan. With sure artistry and great power he depicted what happens when a man responds directly to human need across the barriers of class, race, and condition. Every man is potentially every other man's neighbour. ¹

The love ethic commandment has two purposes. The

¹

Howard Thurman Jesus and the Disinherited
(Philadelphia: Friends United Press, 1981) 41.

first is to call us into accountability as persons of faith. The second is to remind us that because God loves us, we in turn have an obligation to love ourselves accordingly. The love ethic then becomes a reciprocal response. Because God loves us, we in turn respond to God's love by reaching out in love to others.

Now that it has been established that we are called to love as God loved us, we must find a way to continue that love to others. The church as a body of believers can achieve that objective.

H. Richard Niebuhr suggests the overriding principle of the church is "the love of god and neighbor." ¹ It is his opinion that the church exists to resignify and expand the love which exists between God and person as well as individuals relating in the community of faith. The central aim is obscured by the church's failure to objectify its purpose. Accordingly the church has become institutionalized to the point of near paralysis.

Instead of being concerned with examining ways of expressing love of God and neighbor the church often is involved with examining and informing religious education and worship. In this sense the church has become more theoretical and less practical.

¹
H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956) 27.

It is Niebuhr's opinion that the conflicts over such issues as unitarian versus trinitarian, emphasis of living by the scriptures of the Bible versus emphasis of living by the doctrines of an institution, and emphasis on discipleship have pre-empted focusing on the true goal of the church, "increase among men the love of God and neighbor." ¹ He feels these issues are important for the church community, but that they should be supportive rather than primary.

Wayne Clymer expands the notion of the love ethic to suggest it is part of the overall model for visitation ministry.

At a meeting of denominational directors of evangelism I suggested that the objective of evangelism was the increase of membership in the church. I was met as fully expected with a mixture of stunned silence, unbelief and horror. Surely I had misspoken. But I maintained then as I do now, that evangelism means membership. The objections to this thesis are familiar and come quickly to mind:

- 1 By equating evangelism with membership, evangelism is reduced to the already prevalent numbers game. The criterion of success is a quantitative scale, with the presumption that the church with a large membership is successful whereas the small church has failed.
- 2 Moreover, the approach is superficial. It places emphasis upon the outward act of joining the church rather than upon the deeper concerns of the spirit.

¹

Niebuhr, 31.

- 3 To say that evangelism means membership is to misplace the accent of evangelism. It calls people to a decision with respect to the church rather than with respect to Christ. The scriptures call us to faith in Christ, not faith in the church.
- 4 Furthermore, the church doesn't lack numbers. It lacks converts. Simply to increase the membership rolls would not appreciably influence the character of society or redirect its ethical decisions.
- 5 An emphasis upon membership plays into the secular understanding of institutions and seduces the ministry away from its teaching and prophetic roles into a management and promotional style of leadership. In short, the identification of evangelism with church membership is precisely what is wrong with the church. ¹

Furthermore, Clymer suggests that the church as a community of believers is called to be and do in the community. The church is to be a living response to an actualized faith. Clymer quotes the late theologian, William Temple, as having said, "It (the church) exists to be the redeemed community which worships as redeemed." ²

The community of believers according to Bonhoeffer means church within the gathered community. It means a community of individuals who come together for worship. However, the community has a broader scope as well. As Bonhoeffer states the value of the church as a

¹ Wayne Clymer, Membership Means Discipleship (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1976) 15-16.

² Wayne Clymer, 15.

congregation of believers constitutes a visible witness as the church in the community. However, according to Bonhoeffer there is another important aspect, mainly that the community reaches beyond the immediate communicants of the congregation.

There is no doubt that those living far from the congregation can also belong to the 'sanctorum communio'--I am thinking of invalids, castaways, etc--which means we cannot say that for the individual the congregation is 'necessary to salvation'. Nevertheless, the significance for the church of gathering together is fully maintained. These people too have received their faith through concrete with others... 1

The community of believers is an elemental aspect for the expression of theological values. In community (the religious) sociology and theology intermingle and become entwined. The community's understanding of God shapes the sociological focus which express the community's faith. In a reciprocal fashion, the sociological faith practices of the community serve to sharpen the theological acuity of the community.

...we have not come to grips with the real problem of idealism, in that (1) we have not inquired about the essence of the person...and (2) so far as we have discussed the content of the personal we have been biased in the direction of the ethical, and have ignored man's spirituality...

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Communion of Saints (New York: Harper & Row, 1960) 157.

...To (1) we reply...The Christian person--though not only the Christian person--consists in this continual coming into being...To (2) we reply that man's 'spirituality', with its moral and religious capacity, is certainly indispensable as a presupposition for moral growth as a person. 1

Bonhoeffer speaks of the two 'personifications' of the care giver. "One is that he is a member of the church of Christ and is thus endowed with every priestly right and duty to give council. The second is that the care giver is just another 'believer' who cannot basically say anything of decisive import about me." 2

In this setting the individual is at once an integral part of the community and at the same time isolated from it. Bonhoeffer states in part of his dissertation that the basis of Christian commitment suggests a primary relationship between the community and the Holy.

It has always been recognised that man in his primal state must be thought of in communion with God. But it has very seldom been noted that this belongs with social community. In speaking of the church in Adam's time there was no thought of any communal relation, but only of the preaching of the divine word at mankind's beginning. 3

If we as individuals comprise the community of God and we are to carry out the purpose of the church. We must know what love is and who our neighbors are. We are

1
Bonhoeffer, 37.
2
Bonhoeffer, 171.
3
Bonhoeffer, p. 43.

required as Christians to love one another and to pursue that concept.

In the language of Christianity love of God and neighbor is both 'law' and 'gospel;' it is both the requirement laid on man by the Determiner of all things and the gift given, albeit in incompleteness, by the self-giving of the Beloved. ¹

The concept and instruction of love was given to people by God through Jesus Christ as he demonstrated the self giving ministry.

Love of God and neighbor is the gift given through Jesus Christ by the demonstration in incarnation, words, deeds, death and resurrection that God is love--a demonstration we but poorly apprehend yet sufficiently discern to be moved to a faltering response of reciprocal love. ²

When called to love, how do we define an abstract action such as love? What do we tell our visitation committees to do when we tell them that Mrs. X needs "love?" Love is the enabler of the self actualization in the wholeness of life. We tend to define love in terms of "love is not," love is not hurtful, love is not careless, Niebuhr defines love in terms of "love is."

Love is rejoicing over the existence of another. Love is gratitude: it is the thankfulness for the existence of another; it is a gratitude that does not seek equality. Love is reverence: it does not seek

¹
Niebuhr, 32.

²
Niebuhr, 32.

to absorb the other in the self or want to be absorbed by it. Love is loyalty: it is the willingness to let the self be destroyed rather than that the other cease to be. 1

Love is a complex relationship, it does not exist unless we love and pass that attitude on to our neighbor. There is a triad formed by the interrelationship of self, companion, and God. It is through this triad that each member can reach actualization.

With their understanding of the divine-human nature of Jesus Christ and the ubiquity of Christ in all compassionate and needy companions, Christians are led to see that as the neighbor cannot exist or be known or be valued without the existence, knowledge and love of God, so also God does not exist and God-for-us or become known or loved as God except in his and our relation to the neighbor. The interrelations of self, companion and God are so intricate that no member of this triad exists in his true nature without the others, nor can be known or loved without the others. 2

One might ask, if we are called to love our neighbor, who is our neighbor? The idea of neighbor is worldwide, not just local or in close proximity. Niebuhr's definition of neighbor is boundless and ever present, the unacceptable as well as the acceptable, the undesirable as well as the desirable, unlike the convenient, comfortable, acceptable persons with which we wish to associate.

He is my friend, the one who has shown compassion

1
Niebuhr, 35.

2
Niebuhr, 33.

toward me; and my enemy, who fights against me. He is the one in need, in whose hunger, nakedness, imprisonment and illness I see or ought to see the universal suffering servant. He is the oppressed one who has not risen in rebellion against my oppression nor rewarded me according to my deserts as individual or member of a heedlessly exploiting group. He is the compassionate one who ministers to my needs: the stranger who takes me in; the father and mother, sister and brother. 1

Loving a neighbor is an identifiable task, even if it may be difficult, but how do we dare love God? How can our love be acceptable to God? How can we love God, whom we are totally dependent upon, One who is so mystical? Niebuhr states:

Reconciliation to God is reconciliation to life itself; love to the Creator is love of being, rejoicing in existence, in its source, totality and particularity. Love to God is loyalty to the idea of God when the actuality of God is mystery....it is the devoted will to maintain a universal community at whatever cost to the self...Love to God is conviction that there is faithfulness at the heart of things. 2

The nature and vitality of visitation ministry can be accented by technology, however, the power of visitation ministry is clearly rooted in relational theology. When a person relates to God, then in turn relates to other people the faith of the individual and community are both enhanced.

Out of shared, that is a corporate understanding, we

1
Niebuhr, 37.

2
Niebuhr, 37.

participate in ministry together. As individuals participating in the faith we experience and share in the gathering of believers. In community the responsibility of faith begins to infuse itself as a part of our belief structure. As believers we are charged with two primary responsibilities. First to be open to God in a faithful manner, to be open to what one believes God is calling one to do. Second, to actively share God's love with friend and neighbor. In the faith community we are called to be responsible to God. Furthermore we are called to be responsive in God's love to those around us. ¹

The reality of God is experienced in personal relationships. In the intimacy of human interaction the Holy is encountered and revealed. Isolation negates the love of God in as much as it prohibits Gods love to be truly revelatory. If life lived is faith-centered, then God is encountered in that which one does as well as that which one is. Thus, God becomes a part of life's totality yet is not the totality of life. God becomes an element of all one's relationships, and does so without usurping the relationship.

As one intends to be more open in relation to God, one's lifestyle then becomes more wholistic. Wholistic living requires active participation on the part of

¹

Bonhoeffer, 185.

individuals. Relationships require understanding and relating to that part of the Holy which resides in each individual. ¹

A living religious community is constituted in relationships. How people relate individually as well as in community is defined by the nature, shape and substance of the relationship.

Martin Buber's 'I and Thou' concept exemplifies the importance of holistic relationships. Buber feels there is difference between a man's attitude to other men and man's attitude to things. In explaining the difference between 'I and Thou' and 'I and It' relationships he writes:

To man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude.

The attitude of man is twofold, in accordance with the twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks.

The primary words are not isolated words, but combined words.

The one primary word is the combination 'I-Thou'.

The other primary word is the combination 'I-It'; Wherein, without a change in the primary word, one of the words 'He' and 'She' can replace 'it'.

Primary words do not signify things, but they intimate relations.

Primary words do not describe something that might exist independently of them, but being spoken they bring about existence.

Primary words are spoken from the being.

If 'Thou' is said, the 'I' of the combination 'I-Thou' is said along with it.

If 'It' is said, the 'I' of the combination 'I-It'

¹

Bonhoeffer, 184.

is said along with it.

The primary word 'I-Thou' can only be spoken with the whole being.

The primary word 'I-It' can never be spoken with the whole being.

There is no 'I' taken in itself, but only the 'I' of the primary word 'I-Thou' and the 'I' of the primary word 'I-It'.

When a man says 'I' he refers to one or other of these. The 'I' to which he refers is present when he says 'I'. Further, when he says 'Thou' or 'It', the 'I' of one of the two primary words is present.

The existence of 'I' and the speaking of 'I' are one and the same thing.

When a primary word is spoken the speaker enters the word and takes his stand in it. ¹

As the world becomes more dependent upon machines there is declining need for human resources. However, the other side of that equation is that the less people are used, the greater they desire interrelationships.

In summary, the theology of visitation ministry is immanent, transcendent and relational. It is immanent because as Buber suggests the thou we encounter in God is possible only through grace.

It is-transcendent because as Bonhoeffer suggests, in community the personal spirituality of the individual is clarified and the social responsibility of the community of believers for others in the community is developed.

It is relational because as Niebuhr suggests when one encounters God and neighbor, one is reminded of God's claim on the individual as well as on the community.

¹
Martin Buber, I And Thou (London: Clark, 1937) 3-4.

Living in the modern age lends itself to depersonalization. We live in the age of fast food, instant banking and computer learning centers. It is quite possible to eat, do business, teach or acquire learning with little or no personal contact.

Personal outreach is integral to the life of the church and to the lives of the individuals of the church. Only through the visitation ministry can the charter of the church, to extend God's love to all, be upheld. Only through personal contact can the God in us communicate with the God in others. Only through committed evangelistic effort can we feed the hungry, quench the thirst of the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and go to the prisoner.

CHAPTER III

MEMBERSHIP VISITATION

Visitation of the membership is done differently by churches and the form it takes may be dependent upon the focus of the church and the priority level that membership visitation occupies.

For some churches in which the emphasis is upon growth, there may be a neglect for the care of the members since the church may concentrate visitation on non-members. However, when new members are not visited they may not become adequately assimilated in the church and so may be become drop-outs. More long time members may drop out if their needs are not being met and they become anxious. Thus, even for the growth inspired church, visitation of members is necessary for the continued membership of persons already in the church.

Visitation of membership is necessary not only for the assimilation of new members, but also for the continuing nurture of the membership.

"Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed, and the ears of those who will hear will harken." Isaiah 32:3. It is our responsibility as a church to hear and to see the lives of our members. To hear we must listen. This means that we must put ourselves and the members in a position to listen and to tell so that we may understand.

We may visit the member in their home or in our church office, but a person is usually more comfortable in their own home. The time honored home visit by the pastor or lay person is well established for good reasons. However, the telephone and hospital as well as the pastor's study for visits serve good purposes and can be incorporated into an effective program of visitation.

A church's focus may be upon missions, and the idea of visitation to hear a person's story or to visit for a critical situation, sickness, death, may not be a high priority of a church. However, our mission as Christ's church includes the visitation of members of that Body of Christ. We are motivated to show loving kindness to others through the love of Christ whose love extends from us to all others. Love is the focus of missions, and love is the focus of caring. ¹

Why visit? We have mentioned that a caring ministry as part of the Body of Christ is part of the very definition of a church as described in the New Testament. This is both the theological and biblical idea of "why visit," and it motivates and is primary when discussing any other motives for a visitation and caring ministry.

There are reasons for visiting which have been presented by the General Board of Discipleship of the

¹

Alistair J. Campbell, Paid to Care? (London: Westminster Press, 1985) 95.

United Methodist Church that are evangelistic in nature. A great concern of many churches is church growth. One way to maintain church growth is through the assimilation of new members and a slowing of drop-outs in the membership of a church. 1

It has been found that, "the dominant factor which attracts persons to the church and holds them is a sense of being accepted, loved, and wanted." 2 This may be built and enhanced through a continuing program of visitation by both the clergy and the lay people.

Anxiety is the key for understanding why many persons drop out of active participation in the life of the church. Although their behavior may seem at first to look simply like a lack of interest or low commitment, a deeper look may reveal that persons drop out as a way of dealing with the uncomfortable and painful feelings of anxiety. 3

Sometimes a person may be experiencing anxiety due to an event that happened in the church when a person in leadership has been criticized for poor work. This may create uncomfortable and anxious feelings. The person may believe that if a recognized leader was so unacceptable, that s/he may never be able to participate in church in an acceptable way.

¹
Lyle E. Schaller, Growing Plans (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983) 87-89.

²
Neal Jensen, McGlone and Mitchell, Bridge-building Workshop (Training Enterprises/New Techniques, 1977) 2-5.

³
Jensen, McGlone and Mitchell, 7.

A person may feel rejected by a leader in the church when it is not at all the case. While the situation may not exist, the feelings are real and not unusual in a church.

Guilt feelings of not being able to live up to the ideals of the church become so great that persons just drop out rather than live the lie.

Feelings that one is not worth while or that God is good to others but not to me, are also anxiety producing situations that may cause drop-out.

These situations must be addressed by a visit of lay person or clergy to express the love of Christ to avoid drop-out.

In addition, there are many situations which may be addressed by the church when a caring ministry is part of that church's focus. There are visits when a job has been lost, when a family member has died, when in the hospital, or when a child has been born.

Regardless of the focus of a particular church, the regular visitation of members through a permanent program is essential for the well-being of a congregation.

Visitation of members takes many forms. Today we have many choices in what manner to visit a member. We may never be able to participate in church in an acceptable way.

A person may feel rejected by a leader in the church when it is not at all the case. While the situation may

not exist, the feelings are real and not unusual in a church.

Guilt feelings of not being able to live up to the ideals of the church become so great that persons just drop out rather than live the lie.

Feelings that one is not worth while or that God is good to others but not to me, are also anxiety producing situations that may cause drop-out.

These situations must be addressed by a visit of lay person or clergy to express the love of Christ to avoid drop-out.

In addition, there are many situations which may be addressed by the church when a caring ministry is part of that church's focus. There are visits when a job has been lost, when a family member has died, when in the hospital, or when a child has been born.

Regardless of the focus of a particular church, the regular visitation of members through a permanent program is essential for the well-being of a congregation.

Visitation of members takes many forms. Today we have many choices in what manner to visit a member. We can visit in person, on the telephone, and through letters. We are able to visit in our offices, in our home, in their home, in the hospital, in the cemetery, in a restaurant. A variety of possible visitation models will be examined.

The Home Visit

The home visit may be made by the pastor or by a lay person. The visit may be as a result of a problem or event, or it may be a regular yearly visit.

There may be a special committee known as a shepherding group or a caring ministry group which regularly visits small groups in the church. In the shepherding idea, a lay person acts as a "shepherd" watching over a small group of church members and their families. The shepherd will regularly visit these members and family groups just to visit, in cases of stress and anxiety and in times of celebration. The shepherd reports regularly to the pastor. While the shepherd's contacts may be primarily made in the member's home, s/he may also use other forms of contact.

In caring ministries in the church there is a committee designed and trained specifically to care for persons who are in stress and who are members of the church.

A home visit entails listening to a person's story, happy and/or sad and encouraging the story-telling. The visit should last as long as the conversation is lively and for no longer than both the visitor and visited have time. This is very flexible depending on the situation. It is better to leave before the visited wants you to leave. Practice gives more guidelines.

A prayer is important at the close of the visit because we are representing church and prayer is a part of our faith heritage and practice. The visitor may ask if it is all right to have prayer to close the visit.

If this person has not been to church is some time, it is a good idea to write down the times for worship before the visit to give to the visited just before you leave.

Notes on the visit now must be made so that insights for and recommendations for the next visit are fresh in your mind. The pastor may be contacted if the visit is made by a lay person, and the notes can be valuable in assessing the outcome of the visit. If the pastor made the visit the same is true for relaying information to the lay person who visits next. Information vital to the notes are the correct spelling of the name, address and phone number, the date when the call was made, the visitor's name and the summary of the conversation. Notes on the referral made to some other person in the church should also be included. The pastor may or may not be able to share the notes on the conversation, since it may be confidential. Members need to be advised that conversations with the pastor are confidential. This encourages in-depth participation in the conversation. The ideas in this paragraph may be utilized for all types of following visitation.

It is a good idea to have both lay and clergy to

visit members at separate times. It demonstrates a wide range of caring in the congregation. Some members may feel that the clergy are paid to visit, and others may feel that no one but the clergy really care.

In time of Death. It is important for a pastor to visit in the home of the family when there is a death. The pastor may offer counselling on the funeral as well as on the grief process. Frequently the problems of planning a funeral service are overwhelming to bereaved persons. The pastor may let the congregation know that when a person dies the family should call him/her before the funeral director.

The family members will want to talk about the person who has died, their life, its meaning, and their relationship. This is material for a funeral or memorial service and notes may be taken during the visit with an explanation to the family. The pastor may ask the family for a selection of hymns and scripture for the service. Follow-up visits will follow because the grief process is a long one, and remembering the anniversaries of deaths in the families of the congregation may be important. This may also be a time that the family will want to discuss theological issues that have never before occurred to them. This may deal with an after life and who is going to heaven or to hell. The pastor needs to be prepared to answer these kinds of questions. A prayer is offered at

the close of the visit praying for the family and thanking God for the life of the one who has died.

In Time of Emergency. Emergencies of many types arise in every family. The families who are close to the church will often call the pastor at these times. The emergency may be real or imagined, but it will always be real to the one who called. A child may have run away; a robbery or burglary may have occurred; an accident may have happened; an argument may have gotten out of control; a family fight may have occurred; or abuse or molestation may have taken place. The pastor, shepherd, caring ministries member or other lay person needs to be cautious in these situations, both in choosing the ones to respond and the manner in which one responds. The lay person as well as the pastor must know when to refer the church member to a professional for longer term or emergency help. If the people involved are rational, the pastor or visitor may hear the story and respond with understanding and a prayer. If the people involved are hysterical and the situation has not been at all resolved, others need to be called in. If the situation calls for long term or emergency help, the addresses and telephone numbers need to be at hand.

In Times of Celebration. It is an important for the pastor and the church to share in the times of celebration

as it is to share in the difficult times of life. The celebration might be the birth of a child, the return home of a child or the reunion of family members. The visit would ordinarily be as an invitation, however, frequently the members are not aware that there is someone who cares in this way in the church. In this case the visitor may actually ask for an invitation if it seems feasible and polite to do so. A small gift from the church may be taken and a prayer of celebration offered at the close of the visit.

Telephone Visitation Ministry

There are many times that a telephone call is not only more practical but more effective than a home visit. Furthermore, "there are fewer distracting and misleading signals to sort out." ¹

Telephone visitation may be made when time, distance and convenience are called for. The telephone should not be used in cases of death visitation or very sensitive problems unless there is no alternative. A hug or caring touch cannot be given on the telephone, but a loving and caring attitude can come through with practice.

Telephone visitation may be used when there many

¹
Genevieve Dallke, "How to Use the Telephone as an Instrument of Caring," a pamphlet from the Telephone Task Force of Garden Grove United Methodist Church, Garden Grove, California.

people to contact and there is not enough time for separate home visits, or when members live a distance from the church and home visits cannot be made as often as contact is needed.

Some people are actually more comfortable with the distance a telephone gives and will be able to open up to the pastor or caring lay person more fully.

The use of the telephone may also be indicated when a call needs to be made immediately, and there is not time to go visit.

Conversation by the called needs to be heightened and encouraged rather than an information call by the pastor or caring lay person. Paraphrasing of the person's conversation is appropriate to be certain of the story and to encourage conversation. Questions that elicit a "yes" or "no" response can be eliminated by rewording with prior thought to the conversation.

Prayers may be offered over the telephone just as they are in the home visit. To say, "I'll be thinking of you," is not as Christian or as effective as, "I'll be praying for you, and let's pray together now."

The Hospital Visit

All church members in the hospital need to be visited by the pastor and by other church members. If there is to be surgery its time should be noted by the pastor, and the

pastor can call either in person the day before the surgery or if this is not possible - by telephone the night before the surgery. The family might need a visit during the surgery or at the time it is over so that the pastor can be present when the surgeon offers the outcome of the surgery.

Regular visits to the hospital may be made other than visiting hours to prevent too many people present in the room. The visit should be short - no more than ten to fifteen minutes, and less - two to four minutes - if the church member is in intensive care. The hospital rules should always be followed. It is appropriate to ask questions of the hospital personnel if uncertain of the rules.

The visit may be closed with prayer. If the family members and friends are present they may be asked to all join hands while praying. In the hospital it is a good idea to touch the person for whom the prayer is being offered.

In some cultures the family may ask the pastor to anoint the dying person with oil as a prayer is said. The pastor should pour some oil into his/her palm and rub it on the person's head, if possible, or arm or hand saying a prayer of thanks for the life of the dying person, and for the loving kindness of God who is with us all. Thanks may also be given for a loving family.

The pastor may try to be present during a death

encouraging prayer and presence by the family. This can eliminate some fear and help the coming grief process. If the dying person is aware, it may also be of help in giving permission by the family to leave.

The pastor should follow the needs of the family closely so as to give privacy and assistance when needed.

Visitation of Home Bound Members

Members who are not able to leave their homes or to come to church because of illness or disability have been referred to as "shut-ins." Some persons prefer being called "home bound members" instead. These members may be reminded that even though they are not able to come to church they are still full members and in good stead with the church. A disability does not cause one to be dropped the pastor and the home bound member. It is also a great relief to most families for the pastor and church members to visit because their visitation responsibilities are reduced by the attention of the church. Visiting once a month is a good time table, however, some home bound members need to be visited more often and good judgement needs to be used here.

For some home bound members, home will be a nursing home or a convalescent home. It is just as important to visit here as at their own house. Communion may be served if the member is able. Sometimes the member may not seem

to be aware of where they are or who the visitor is. It is important to be calm and remind the home bound person of the love of the church has for them. Family and specific church members that the person knows may be mentioned. If these ideas do not seem to get through, a short chat and prayer may be offered always asking the home bound person to join in with the Lord's Prayer. Often even when other things are forgotten, the Lord's Prayer remains, and the home bound member who has problems remembering can say the "Our Father."

All church members need to be visited on a schedule of visitation by both the pastor and other members of the congregation in order to provide Christian nurture and fellowship as well as providing a caring ministry in times of stress.

CHAPTER IV

VISITATION OF NON-MEMBERS

With the church being to us a representation of the Body of our Savior, it is essential that a pastor's conception of visitation permits that visitation to be as multifaceted in purpose as possible, and that evangelization is always the desired result. This is because one of the motivating factors in the life of the pastor is the strengthening and the development of Christ's body.

When a pastor of a congregation visits a member in their home, hospital or workplace, the pastor is representing Christ in that encounter as each Christian would want to be representative of our Savior in their encounter with each other, as well as with non-Christians. This is why I see non-member and non-believer visitation as being essential to the ongoing ministry of the church. Non-member and non-believer visitation is especially crucial at this time in the life of the mainline denominations, when they appear to be losing both members and credibility.

Dr. Peter Wagner, associate professor of church growth at Fuller Theological School of World Mission, states that "while both evangelism and social concern are parts of the mission of the church in the world,

evangelism is primary." 1

Since it not necessary to evangelize members who are active in church, then this primacy of evangelism must be associated with non-Christians.

When a pastor does non-member and non-believer visitation, the pastor is not taking the "gospel to someone to whom Jesus does not already belong." 2 When we interact with people who are non-members, or non-believers, and are not a part of the institutional church, we may find ourselves acting as a Christian apologist. Because to non-members as well as to members, we are representatives of the Faith. Since the church is essential to our understanding of being a Christian, we are interested in the health and well being of what ever the local church might represent to us the Body of our Savior.

Dr. Robert Arnott of the School of Theology at Claremont, makes the point in his church administration class that when we think in terms of the systems approach to church growth and administration, that it is crucial to realize the importance of having a balanced input and output. It appears obvious that with the decline of the mainline church membership that this necessary balance of input and output must be given attention. Evangelism has

¹ Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979) 118.

² David H.C. Read, Go & Make Disciples (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978) 75.

primacy according to scripture and tradition, and the scriptural reason for evangelism of social concerns ranks high as a mission priority. Disciples are needed for this task.

Herein lies the challenge. Developing the security, discipline and skills needed for effective non-membership visitation. One of the branches of our armed services has a commercial that states that they are looking for a few good men. We in the church can say that we are looking for lots of people. We are not overly concerned as to whether they are good or not, because the scriptures say that "only God is good," and that he "did not come for the righteous." With this understanding of ourselves in relation to God we go out into the community visiting people where they are found. There is no place in our society that may not be visited by Christians.

A no-hold barred approach to evangelism has heretofore been disregarded by the church. It appears that the mainline church made some poor assumptions. One of them is that the generations born into the church would assume the church of being full. The church has not taken into account such things as adolescent rebellion and the ebb and flow of the birth rate. Thus having been afflicted with such false assumptions, the mainline churches find themselves the victims of shortsightedness and declining membership.

Another reason why visitation with non-members is

important is because of the lack of good press the ministers and the church receive from the media. Millions of dollars are spent every year in the media centers of the world to make the image of the police officer, businessperson, soldier, reporter, and medical doctor look good. The same effort is not being undertaken on behalf of the church and the ministers in the various denominations, with the possible exception of the Roman Catholic church. This vacuum makes non-member and non-believer visitation essential to the spreading of the gospel and the enhancement of the church and its ministries.

Non-member visitation is not a question of opportunity. The problem with non-member visitation is the same as with member visitation. Usually for effective interaction to take place, at least one of the parties participating needs to feel fairly comfortable with themselves. A calling which requires such intimate contact between human beings calls for people who are able to reach out, or permit others to reach in. Some pastors have difficulty in that area.

Hospital Visitation

The hospital is an appropriate place for non-member visitation. The pastor may be called upon to visit friends and family of a church member who are not

Christians or members themselves. This is a way to be invited into the lives of persons not usually connected with a church and thus an excellent means of evangelization.

The hospital's chaplain may meet the needs of a patient at that moment, but there is no real incentive for a hospital chaplain to evangelize, and not at all their function. Theirs is a different ministry of counseling, essentially to assist the patient to cope with "fear, loneliness, anger, and guilt." ¹

A local pastor brings to the hospital, the spirit of a caring community, as well as an open invitation to the patient to become a member of that community sharing the benefits of church membership. The spirit of the minister as it comes through to the patient is in some way representative of the spiritual gifts found within the community of the church. "Very significant studies have been published on the growth trends of three of our mainline denominations, the United Methodist Church, the United Presbyterian Church, and the Southern Baptist Convention. They all verify the crucial role of the pastor"... ² in the growth and development of the local church. This is a reason why the visitation of the pastor

¹ Marcus D. Bryant, The Art of Chirstian Caring (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1979) 67.

² Peter Wagner, Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1979) 138.

of non-members in the community is important. The pastor represents the church, its authority and its love.

It is good for the church for the pastor to have a healthy community presence, and there is no better place for this to take place than in the community hospital.

The pastor when visiting in the hospital may introduce himself/herself as a mutual friend of the person who referred the patient to the pastor. The patient may have the need to talk about his/her illness or other personal problem. The pastor can listen and encourage the story-telling the patient needs to do.

Encouragement and concern may be shown by the caring pastor and a prayer offered at the close of the visit. The hospitalized person may be invited to church when they are well or given a church brochure at the pastor's discretion.

The hospital is just one place that the local pastor has for non-member visitation. There is hardly an area of the community life to which the pastor does not have access and the opportunity to do non-member visitation.

Visitation in the Greater Community

Both clergy and lay persons visiting in the community and relaying the message of their church is necessary to a growing church and one that is interested in evangelization. Many neighbors of churches have never been

invited to the neighborhood church, or may not even know the pastor of any of the members. They will probably not visit the church if not visited themselves.

Therefore, a door to door visitation is appropriate to leave informational material and to introduce oneself as a member or pastor of the local church.

A pastor may also increase visibility in the greater community by attending community functions and identifying himself/herself as pastor of the local church.

Telephone Visitation

Telephone visitation may be used in the community. Telephone numbers, names and addresses of the people in the area may be purchased. When telephoning it is best to know to whom you are speaking and relay your message of the invitation to the church (perhaps for a specific function) briefly, cordially and to the point.

Telephoning may be used when a large number of people need to be contacted. It may also provide a shield that is comfortable to many people.

Churches may receive telephone numbers from first time visitors at church. It is appropriate to call these people after a letter has been sent. The pastor or lay person may ask how the church can help them.

Letters

Contact by letter is not visitation in the way we usually think of it, however, it is a very effective form of communication. It often will be an initial contact with the first time visitor who has come to the church.

It may also be used to send messages of invitation or concern from the church to people in the neighborhood as an introduction to the church.

Many mainline churches are suffering from a lack of dynamic leadership. It is not that there are not people with visions and creative skills. It is just that these are not characteristics that a church which has grown conservative with its aging members finds itself comfortable with. These qualities of vision and leadership can be found in various places in the broad community. It is the challenge of the church to interest people from the community in its membership.

Visitation to non-members is necessary to both church growth and maintenance of membership.

CHAPTER V

DEFINING THE CHURCH'S NEED A PRACTICAL MODEL

As ministers of Jesus Christ it is our charter to spread the good news of His kingdom. In order to meet this charter it is essential to provide an atmosphere conducive to the metamorphosis of becoming a Christian and receiving the gift God is offering. One of the most difficult tasks church leaders have is defining what the community needs in order to grow into wholeness. Once the needs have been determined, church leaders can initiate the programs necessary to provide an atmosphere of growth.

The process by which the church community moves into wholeness is the role evangelism plays in the church. Evangelism is the prevailing attitude of the church which tells the community of believers "we love you, we want you, we appreciate you, and we wish for you to grow into the wholeness God has promised you and that you deserve."

This section addresses the task of defining the needs of the church, which once defined determines where evangelistic and programatic energy will be spent.

It is felt that to most effectively meet the goal of defining church needs, the program must be supported by clergy and laity alike. The task must be done in a methodical and consistent manner. It is suggested a task force be established to administrate the project.

The responsibility of the task force is to identify the current position of the church thereby determining the needs of the church. To carry out this responsibility a program is set up, surveys are done, and the data is evaluated. A suggested program a church can use to pattern their program after is one developed by the Garden Grove United Methodist Church formulated through the Measure of the Church program.

This program or model (as it will be referred to from this point forward) concentrates on measuring the aspects of church life, fellowship, proclamation, and service. The model is divided into three steps; one, setting up the program; two gathering information; and three, evaluating the current status of the church.

SETTING UP THE PROGRAM

The steps of setting up the program are:

State the objectives of the program.

- o To evaluate the current status of the church, 15 measures that cover all areas of church life will be developed fellowship. These measures center on proclamation, and service. Four of the measures are surveys to be conducted on Sundays during the worship services; eight measures are annual reports derived from church records; and three measures are derived from interviews and community indices.

Communicate with the laity and clergy

- o Meet with the commissions to solicit their support in the project outlining the objectives and programs to be used in attaining them.

- o Communicate with the congregation advising them of the project and soliciting their support.
- o Communicate with other churches and community organizations to develop community indicators.
- o Use the media available to the church community: district programs, community newspaper, regular church newsletter, special mailings, etc.

Train the Task Force

- o Reinforce in the task force the objectives of the program.
- o Train task force in procedures of conducting and evaluating surveys.

Administer the Program

- o Assign tasks
- o Provide office duties, mailing, copying, record keeping, etc.

GATHERING INFORMATION

Information must be gathered in order to determine the current atmosphere and effectiveness of the on-going projects. The information can be gathered a number of ways, two of which are used in this model, surveys and reviewing information contained in existing reports.

Four surveys will be conducted and evaluated. Their objective is to measure the current atmosphere as perceived by the congregation.

Measure #1: The Ministry of Fellowship (Attachment #1)
The purpose is to measure the participation by current members and constituents in the current offering

of fellowship opportunities as well as their perceptions of the congeniality of the atmosphere.

Responsibility: Evangelism Commission

Measure #2: Visitor Perceptions (Attachment #2)

The purpose of this survey is to measure the visitor outreach program of the church.

Responsibility: Evangelism Commission

Measure #3: Basics of Faith Inventory (Attachment #3)

The purpose of this survey is to measure the theological understanding of the congregation.

Responsibility: Christian Education Commission and Adult Council Commissions

Measure #4: Quality of Worship Experience (Attachment #4)

The purpose of this survey is to measure the quality of the worship experience.

Responsibility: Worship Commission

Eight measures regarding the interaction of the congregation with the church are based upon the results of annual reports prepared by the Commissions as required by their bylaws.

Measure #5: Involvement of Members (Attachment #5)

The purpose of this report is to determine the level of

involvement of active members. The criteria of involvement is the members who, at least yearly, attend church twice, make one financial contribution and participate in one church activity (excluding worship).

Responsibility: Evangelism Commission

Measure #6: Worship Attendance (Attachment #5)

The purpose of this report is to measure the percentage of the congregation attending worship services.

Responsibility: Worship Commission

Measure #7: Membership Potential (Attachment #6)

The purpose of this report is to measure the potential membership.

Responsibility: Evangelism Commission

Measure #8: Level of Giving (Attachment #6)

The purpose of this report is to measure the money contributed as a percentage of the estimated median family income.

Responsibility: Finance Commission

Measure #9: Participation in Education (Attachment #7)

The purpose of this report is to measure the percentage of participation of the congregation as students in the Christian Education program.

Responsibility: Education Commission and Adult Council

Measure #10: Involvement in Witnessing (Attachment #7)

The purpose of this report is to measure the percentage of the congregation that participates in verbal witnessing.

Responsibility: Evangelism Commission

Measure #11: Benevolence Giving (Attachment #8)

The purpose of this report is to measure the giving of benevolences as a percentage of total expenses (inferring the higher the percentage, the better the financial status).

Responsibility: Missions Committee

Measure #12: Institutional Church Life Style
(Attachment #8)

The purpose of this report is to measure the use of the facilities in relationship to improving the welfare of others.

Responsibility: Trustee Committee

Three measures regarding the interaction of the congregation with the community are based upon the results of interviews and community indices.

Measure #13: The Service Survey (Attachment #9)

The purpose of this survey is to measure the level of community service offered by the congregation.

Responsibility: Social Concerns and Missions Commissions

Measure #14: Mission Support Index (Attachment #10)

The purpose of this survey/report is to measure the degree to which the congregation supported missions.

Responsibility: Missions Commission

Measure #15: Local Involvement in Service Ministries
(Attachment #10)

The purpose of this survey/report is to measure the degree to which the congregation support local community organizations.

Responsibility: Social Concerns Committee

EVALUATING THE RESULTS

After the information has been gathered it must be evaluated to determine the current position of the church as it relates to the congregation and the community. The results are evaluated on three points; one, the expectations of the clergy; 2, the expectations of the congregation; and three standard in the community (in the area of outside contract).

It is the responsibility of the Task Force to set evaluative standards and determine if those standards are currently been met, and if not, suggest programs needed to move the actual result closer to the desired. An example of the evaluative process is as follows.

Measure: #1 Fellowship Survey

Question: Do you feel accepted and included in the life of the congregation?

Desired standards as set by:

Clergy: 95%

Congregation: 90%

Actual: 35%

Interpretation: There is a 55 point difference between what the congregation desires and what they actually are experiencing. The majority do not feel accepted and included, even though that is their desire.

Suggested Programs:

1. Institute a plan for a church wide visitation program designed to go into homes and listen to people's stories and affirm them as persons of God.
2. Redesign fellowship gathering, evaluate current offering; discard ineffective programs; enhance effective programs and add new programs.

In conclusion, this section addresses a method that can be used to identify the needs of the congregation in order toward the wholeness promised by God. This goal can be best attained by the use of a task force whose responsibilities include setting up the project, gathering information and evaluating the climate of the church.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Visitation ministry is biblical and theological at its center. Through theology the faith community has come to interpret, understand and infuse visitation evangelism as one of the most vital aspects of the church's ministry. The transcendent nature of God as revealed to the biblical archetypes (Abraham, Isaiah, Moses, et al) was recorded in the Jewish Testament initiated the concept of God's relationship to peoples.

Visitation ministry is personal in the Christian testament. The life and ministry of Jesus exemplifies the personification of God's love. In his teaching and by personal example Jesus set the standard for which the church is to strive. Jesus broadened the understanding of who was involved in ministry by establishing a support community around him. He broke barriers by claiming God's love meant ministry to all, not just to those in one's immediate community.

Visitation ministry is practical. Active visitation ministry is by necessity, self evaluative. To be in community is to be the church. The task of the church is ministry. If the church is to endure, then the community of the faithful must look at how effective it is in ministry. Self evaluation enables the community to

understand, interpret and act upon the call to
discipleship.

ATTACHMENTS

Measure #1: The Fellowship Survey 1

1985 Objective: 90%

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
Do you feel...		
congregation is warm and friendly?	96	96
Satisfied with current fellowship opportunities?	95	96
you do a good job of welcoming strangers?	47	43
you have adequate opportunity to express concerns?	84	89
satisfied with opportunities for leadership?	86	91
accepted and included in the life of the congregation	93	92
your effort of giving friendship is adequate?	59	65
your effort of giving friendship is reciprocated?	79	82
you could count on congregation for care and support?	86	88
OVERALL AVERAGES	81	82

¹ Barbie Whorton, "TMC Report," a report from the TMC Task Force of Garden Grove United Methodist Church, Garden Grove, California.

Measure #2: Visitor Perceptions 1

1985 Objective: 90%

	<u>% YES's</u>	<u>in 1983</u>
	<u>Survey 1</u>	<u>Survey 2</u>

Results of a telephone survey of
first time visitors:

Did anyone introduce themselves to you?	52	76
Did anyone invite you to our coffee hour?	38	40
Would you say we are warm, friendly, open?	100	96
Have you been contacted by a church member?	100	77
OVERALL RESULTS	71	72

The following question was added to the
survey on 2/6/83.

How did you learn about our church?

Invited by a friend	40
Knew the church was there	23
Looked in the phone book	10
Came with family member	4
Weddings, Baptisms	14
Just driving by	5
Child in Nursery School	1
Attending Fellowship Group	1
Walked down from St. Columban's on Easter	1

Note: The total number of first-time visitor registrations
1983 was 489. The survey results are based on the 111
registrations that included a telephone number. Each
registration may be a single person, a couple, or a family.

1

Whorton, "TMC Report."

Measure #3: Basics of Faith Inventory 1

This is a multiple choice questionnaire re your Christian understanding and belief. Figure shown is the % that responded with what the survey designer considered to be the preferred answer.

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
The measure of my faithfulness to to God is....	68	54
To say that I am a sinner means....	38	37
"Jesus Christ is my Lord" means....	53	55
"Jesus Christ is my Savior" means...	34	39
"Love my neighbor" means....	66	64
"Being saved" means....	56	65
The Christian Church exists to...	80	80
"God"....	83	83
The Bible is....	56	55
Belief in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit means....	43	46
Prayer is....	87	83
When I die....	52	52
Through the sacrament of baptism....	80	79
Through the sacrament of the Lord's Supper....	62	63
OVERALL AVERAGES	61	61

(Note: this report shows the result of a survey taken. The survey used was a multiple choice type of questionnaire listing three to four choice for each of the above items. It is important for each church to design their own questionnaires bases on the theological tennents of their congregation.

 1

Whorton, "TMC Report."

Measure #4: Quality of Worship Experience 1

1985 Objective: 90%

	<u>% YES's</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
When participating in worship services, do you...			
experience a sense of God's presence or acceptance or love?		95	94
have a journey of faith strengthened or directed?		95	94
become drawn closer together in loving fellowship with other members?		91	88
become sensitized to the needs and issues within your community and world?		81	82
become motivated to express faith more through participation in Christian Education, personal witnessing or community service?		78	81
OVERALL AVERAGES		88	88

¹
Whorton, "TMC Report."

Measure #5: Involvement of Members 1

1985 Objective: 50%

	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
Active membership roll	1073	1140	1185
Members on concern list	<u>104</u>	<u>104</u>	<u>74</u>
Involved members as % of active members	90	91	94

Measure #6: Worship Attendance 1

1985 Objective: 62%

	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
Active membership roll	1073	1140	1185
Average weekly attendance	585	610	632
% attendance	55	57	55

Note: Average weekly attendance=Sum of usher's count, Samoan count, Circuit Riders and retreat (if held).

 1

Whorton, "TMC Report."

Measure #7: Membership Potential 1

Yearly Objective 100%

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
Active membership roll	1140	1185
Potential membership	1196	1319
Membership as % potential	<u>95</u>	<u>90</u>

Measure #8: Level of Proportionate Giving 1

1985 Objective: 2.0%

	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
Total Contributions	\$395,152	\$301,359	\$358,384
Potential No. of families	680	668	637
Average giving per family	\$581	\$451	\$562
Est. median family income	\$29,600	\$32,800	\$33,950
% of proportionate giving	1.9	1.4	1.7

1

Whorton, "TMC Report."

Measure #9: Participation in Christian Education 1

1985 Objectives:

Children:	60%
Youth:	30%
Adult:	30%

<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
-------------	-------------

Participation in Christian Education
as a % of potential:

Children	47	73.7
Youth	23	46.2
Adult	22	15.0

These percentages are calculated on community-based formulae.

Measure #10: Involvement in Verbal Witnessing 1

1985 Objective: 10%

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
Active membership roll	1100	1185
No. of "Share their faith" occurrences as indicated by the number of cards turned in	9	8
% involvement	0.8	0.6

1

Whorton, "TMC Report."

Measure #11: Benevolence Giving 1

1985 Objective: 26%

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
Total expenditures	\$369,089	\$406,405
Total benevolences	\$82,201	\$68,758
Benevolences as % of expenditures	22.3	17.0

Measure #12: Institutional Church Life Style 1

1985 Objective: Index of 50

	<u>Index Points</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
Use of facilities, property and equipment to improve welfare of others		25	33
Use of financial assets to improve the welfare of others		0	0
Actions "modeling a just and caring community" and witnessing our concerns for the well-being of others"		15	15
INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH LIFESTYLE INDEX		40	48

1

Whorton, "TMC Report."

Measure #13: The Service Survey 1

1985 Objective: 70%

	% YES's	1982	1983
Service ministry improves well being of community residents?		74	78
Opportunity to put faith into action through community involvement?		81	88
Contributed more than \$50 to human service agencies?		61	70
Volunteered time to community service agency?		29	30
Adequately informed about service ministries:			
locally?		58	66
nationally?		40	37
internationally?		40	36
Comfortable with use of church facilities by others?		94	98
Give \$1.00 to missions for every \$1.00 spent for church?		41	44
"Our Lord calls church to... work for more just society?"		87	97
OVERALL AVERAGE		61	64

1
Whorton, "TMC Report."

Measure #14: Mission Support Index 1

1985 Objective: Index of 60

	<u>Index Points</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
Degree of financial support			
Benevolence as % of expenditures		10	5
Degree of participation in ministry			
Participation as % of total membership		25	25
Degree of participation in denominational programs			
Of listed programs, we participated in		20	20
MISSION SUPPORT INDEX		55	50

Measure #15: Local Involvement in Service Ministries 1

1985 Objective: Index of 65

Did we serve the poor, sick disabled, aged, imprisoned,
those, discriminated against, oppressed by:
 organized studies of special needs
 direct assistance)with food, clothing, shelter,
 structured assistance)visits, money, etc.
 action through political process

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
No. of involvements noted	6	12
LOCAL INVOLVEMENT INDEX	50	80

1

Whorton, "TMC Report."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bales, Harold K. A Comprehensive Plan for Evangelism. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1978.
- Barr, Browne. The Ministering Congregation. Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1972.
- Bell, Arthur Donald. How to Get Along with People in the Church. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960.
- Benson, Edward White. Archbishop of Canterbury. London: Macmillan, 1893.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. The Communion of Saints. NY: Harper & Row, 1960.
- Browning, Don S. Moral Context of Pastoral Care. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976.
- Bryant, Marcus David. The Art of Christian Caring. St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1979.
- Buber, Martin. I and Thou. Ronald Gregor Smith, Trans. Edinburgh: Clark, 1937.
- Campbell, Alastair J. Paid To Care? The Limits of Professionalism in Pastoral Care. London: Westminster Press, 1935.
- Campbell, Alastair J. Rediscovering Pastoral Care. London: Westminster Press, 1981.
- Capps, Donald. Pastoral: A Thematic Approach. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979.
- Child, Kenneth. In His Own Parish - Pastoral Care Through Parochial Visiting. London: S.P.C.K., 1970.
- Clymer, Wayne. Membership Means Discipleship. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1976.
- Cobb, John Boswell, Jr. Theology and Pastoral Care. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.
- Dallke, Genevieve. How to Use the Telephone as an Instrument of Caring. A pamphlet from the Telephone Task Force of Garden Grove United Methodist church, Garden Grove, California.
- Dicks, Russell. How to Make Pastoral Calls, for Ministers and Laymen. St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1962.
- Golay, Eugene E. Lay Visitation Evangelism. Nashville: Tidings, 1961.

- Goodell, Charles L. Cyclopedia of Evangelism. NY: Harper & Brothers, 1921.
- Hancock, Bernard, and Ondatij. Pax Huic Domin: A Manual for Pastoral Visitation. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1912.
- Jensen, Neal, McGlone, and Mitchell,. Workbook for Bridge Building Workshop. San Diego, CA: Training Enterprises, 1977.
- Kung, Hans. Why Priests? Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972.
- May, Herbert G., and Metzger (eds.) The New Oxford Annotated Bible. NY: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Neuhaus, Richard John. Freedom for Ministry. NY: Harper & Row, 1979.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry. NY: Harper & Brothers, 1956.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. Creative Ministry. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M., The Way of the Heart. NY: Seaburg Press, 1981.
- Oates, Wayne Edward. The Bible in Pastoral Care. Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1953.
- Outler, Albert. Evangelism in the Wesleyan Spirit. Nashville: Tidings, 1971.
- Read, David H.C. Go & Make Disciples. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978.
- Schaller, Lyle. The Pastor and the People. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973.
- Schaller, Lyle. Growing Plans. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973.
- Thurman, Howard. Jesus and the Disinherited. Philadelphia: Friends United Press, 1981.
- Turley, Bruce. Being There for Others (A Pastoral Resource for Lay People). St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1976.
- Wagner, Peter. Your Church Can be Healthy. (Creative Leadership series), Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979.

Wagner, Peter. Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church
Grow. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1979.